

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02
IO-13 /077 W

-----021826Z 040478 /43

O R 021805Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4654
INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 09205

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR RH UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: LOW-GRAHAM MEETING WITH OWEN

1. GRANAM AND LOW SAW THE FOREIGN SECRETARY JUNE 2
SHORTLY AFTER OWEN'S RETURN FROM PARIS AND THE CIEC
MEETINGS. ROWLANDS, PALLISER, MANSFIELD, STEEL,
LAVER, HARRISON, WHYTE, AND FERGUSON ALSO ATTENDED.
MUCH OF THE CONVERSATION WAS A REPETITION OF THE REPORT
OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP'S EFFORTS OVER THE LAST TWO
WEEKS (OWEN HAD NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO READ THE
WRITTEN VERSION).

2. OWEN SAID THAT IF THE RHODESIAN WHITES CAN BE CON-
VINCED TO ACCEPT UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE THEN THEY WOULD
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REQUIRE IN RETURN SOME OTHER FORM OF CONSTITUTIONAL
SAFEGUARD. THE GROUP DISCUSSED VARIOUS FORMULAS THAT
MIGHT MEET THIS NEED SUCH AS RESERVED SEATS IN PARLIA-
MENT OR SPECIALLY ELECTED SEATS. CONSTITUTIONAL
PRECEDENTS EXIST IN BOTSWANA AND KENYA. LOW, STEEL,
AND GRAHAM POINTED OUT THAT THE NATIONALISTS WOULD NOT
ACCEPT ANY BLOCKING MECHANISMS THAT WOULD BE (A)

PERMANENTLY ENTRENCHED IN A CONSTITUTION; (B) CONFIGURED ALONG RACIAL LINES; OR (C) DESIGNED TO GIVE THE WHITES THE "KEY" OR "SWING" VOTE. A TEMPORARILY EXPANDED ROLE FOR EUROPEANS IN PARLIAMENT MIGHT BE WORKED OUT AND A JUSTICIABLE BILL OF RIGHTS COULD BE ACCEPTED. BUT PERMITTING THE WHITES A METHOD OF BLOCKING CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS IS ANATHEMA TO THE NATIONALISTS.

3. OWEN STRESSED THAT THE OBJECT OF THE CURRENT EXERCISE IS TO DEVELOP A FAIR AND EQUITABLE CONSTITUTION AND NOT NECESSARILY TO APPEASE THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ON EVERY ISSUE. STEEL ARGUED THAT NO NATIONALIST WILL ACCEPT A FETTERED CONSTITUTION. HE SAID CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES OR MECHANISMS MUST BE SEEN AS HURDLES WHICH ARE HIGH ENOUGH TO INSPIRE WHITE (AND BLACK) CONFIDENCE BUT NOT SO HIGH AS TO GIVE WHITES ALONE A BLOCKING ROLE. OWEN SEEMED ATTRACTED TO THE IDEA THAT SOME CONSTITUTIONAL CLAUSES COULD BE LISTED AS UNCHANGEABLE OVER A PERIOD OF FIVE TO SEVEN YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE.

4. GRAHAM AND LOW DESCRIBED THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT AS THE PROBLEM OF LAW AND ORDER. OWEN SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT BRITAIN WOULD HAVE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SECURITY OF RHODESIA DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PHASE. HE SAID HE DID NOT RULE OUT SMITH'S STEPPING DOWN, PERHAPS EARLIER THAN WE THINK, AT WHICH POINT THE VOID WOULD HAVE TO BE FILLED QUICKLY. HE SPECULATED THERE MAY BE A "CRUMBLING OF WILL" IN SALISBURY EVEN NOW (GRAHAM DISSENTED). OWEN
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SUGGESTED THAT THE DEGREE OF BRITAIN'S COMMITMENT WOULD

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DEPEND ON THE SPECIFIC SUPPORT THE UK RECEIVED FROM THE UNITED STATES, THE COMMONWEALTH, AND OTHERS. LOW ADDED THAT THE DEGREE OF SECURITY COMMITMENT BY ANYONE WOULD DEPEND ON THE LEVEL OF HOSTILITY AT THE TIME OF A SETTLEMENT. HE SAID IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT NOT TO GIVE THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AN EXCUSE TO DROP OUT OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

5. A THIRD CONFIDENCE-BUILDING INGREDIENT INVOLVES ECONOMIC MEASURESTO UNDERPIN THE STABILITY OF AN INDEPENDENT RHODESIA. THE CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON TWO ELEMENTS OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE TO THE WHITE COMMUNITY: PENSIONS AND LAND TRANSFER. OWEN EMPHASIZE THAT IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT THE FCO DEVELOP DETAILED STUDIES UNDER BOTH OF THESE HEADINGS INCLUDING POSSIBLE FORMULAS FOR HOW THEY MIGHT BE IMPLEMENTED, PERHAPS
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IN SOME FORM OF ASSOCIATION WITH THE ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND. OWEN RETURNED TO HIS THEME THAT THE POLITICS OF RHODESIA MAY UNRAVEL MORE QUICKLY THAN WE ANTICIPATE. "WE MUST BE READY TO MOVE." IF A POLITICAL COLLAPSE IS SUDDENLY UPON US, OWEN WENT ON, THE WEST MUST BE READY WITH A PLAN OF ACTION. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN GREATLY ENCOURAGED BY HIS TALKS WITH SECRETARY VANCE IN PARIS AND BY HIS CONTACTS WITH HIS FRENCH AND GERMAN COLLEAGUES. HE CONCLUDED THAT THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE OF UNANIMITY AMONG THESE FOUR POWERS ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES AND ON THE NEED FOR THE WEST TO ACT.
BREWSTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, CONSTITUTION, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LONDON09205
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770196-1233
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770698/aaaadicm.tel
Line Count: 168
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 740cc486-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2306570
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: LOW-GRAHAM MEETING WITH OWEN
TAGS: PFOR, RH, UK, (GRAHAM, JOHN), (LOW, STEPHEN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/740cc486-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009